

World AIDS Day Events in Delaware Dec. 1, 2017



DOVER – Friday, Dec. 1, 2017, marks the 29th World AIDS Day, providing an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV and raise awareness of the continuing epidemic around the globe. This year's theme is "Increasing Impact through Transparency, Accountability, and Partnerships". Several events are scheduled statewide in observance of World AIDS Day.

Approximately 3,500 Delawareans are living with HIV/AIDS. The CDC estimates that another 350 to 400 Delawareans are HIV-positive but are not aware. These individuals pose a great risk of transmitting HIV since they may not take precautions before engaging in high-risk behaviors such as unprotected sex or needle sharing. This may also hold true for those who are aware of their infection, but are not receiving medical care. The Division of Public Health (DPH) encourages Delawareans to learn the facts about HIV, talk about the disease and take action.

"Together we have the power to curb and eventually stop new HIV infections," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "It

starts with getting tested to know your HIV status, and eliminating behavior that places you, and others, at risk for acquiring or transmitting HIV. If you are positive for HIV, we urge you to seek treatment and remain in care.”

Sadly, stigma, discrimination, and misinformation surrounding HIV remain a significant barrier to testing, treatment and prevention. HIV is not spread by hugging, shaking hands, sharing toilets, sharing utensils, or closed-mouth (“social”) kissing with someone who is HIV positive. You cannot get HIV from consuming food handled by an HIV-infected person. HIV is not spread by mosquitoes, ticks or other insects.

Today’s HIV medications allow people to live longer, healthier lives. For those living with HIV, antiretroviral medications taken as prescribed will suppress HIV to undetectable levels in blood. At this level, HIV infected individuals may not transmit the disease to others. In Delaware, 81 percent of those in care are virally suppressed. Still, it remains important to use protective methods such as condoms to prevent the spread of other sexually transmitted diseases.

“It is critical that all sexually active Delawareans know their HIV status and that those who are infected are treated to viral suppression,” said Department of Health and Social Services Secretary Dr. Kara Odom Walker. “If you do not know your status, get tested. The number of Delawareans dying from HIV has dropped significantly over the past 10 years, and significant advances in medical treatment has helped those infected lead normal lives. Lack of medical insurance is not a barrier to HIV treatment in our state.”

With HIV testing as a foundation, HIV-negative persons can link to prevention services to prevent HIV acquisition and transmission. One of the options now available is pre-exposure prophylaxis, (PrEP) which is available for those who are HIV negative, but unable to stop certain types of high-risk behavior. The PrEP pill, taken daily can prevent HIV

infection. For a list of physicians prescribing PrEP, please visit <https://www.delawarehiv.org/delaware-prep/>.

There are several sites in our state that offer free rapid HIV testing. For a list, visit <https://gettested.cdc.gov/>. For more information, please call the Delaware Division of Public Health at (302) 744-1050.

The following events are being held to mark World AIDS Day 2017 in Delaware:

KENT COUNTY

Brandywine Counseling & Community Services

World AIDS Day Event (Anything but Clothes Fashion Show)

Nov. 30, 2017, 7:30 p.m.

Martin Luther King Jr. Student Center, Parlors B & C

Delaware State University

1200 N. DuPont Highway, Dover

Contact: Rebekah Nuttall, 302-504-5999,
rnuttall@branywinecounseling.org

Anything But Clothes Fashion Show in recognition of World AIDS Day. Design an outfit made out of prevention messaging and risk-reduction materials such as condoms, dental dams, lube packets, female condoms, etc. Door and grand prizes of \$300, \$200, and \$100. Free HIV testing and screenings via the COPE RV. Live DJ and free food.

SUSSEX COUNTY

Camp Rehoboth

Candlelight Walk

Dec. 1, 2017, 6:15 p.m.

The Candlelight Walk starts at the Rehoboth Beach Bandstand in downtown Rehoboth. The Service is at All Saints Church in Rehoboth at 18 Olive Ave.

Contact: Salvatore Seeley, 302-227-5620,
salvatoreseeley@aol.com

Candlelight vigil and walk. Reading of the names of those we have lost to AIDS followed by a community supper. Free HIV

testing will be provided from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Camp Rehoboth Community Center. The Candlelight Walk kicks off at the Rehoboth Beach Bandstand at 6:15 p.m. The Service of Remembrance begins at 7:00 p.m.

NEW CASTLE COUNTY

AIDS Delaware/Brandywine Counseling and Community Services

World AIDS Day Youth and Family Forum

Dec. 2, 2017, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Delaware Technical Community College, 300 N. Orange St.,
Wilmington,

Contact: Frank Hawkins, 302-652-6776

Community event to raise awareness about HIV. Exhibitors and panel discussions with people living with HIV. Free testing available on-site.

Beautiful Gate Outreach Center (BGOC)

World AIDS Day Testing Event

Dec. 1, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm

604 N. Walnut St. Wilmington

Contact: Suzanne Tait, 302-472-3002

BGOC will be offering free rapid HIV testing. Free food to all who complete the test process. Random door prizes will be awarded throughout the day!

A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS,

urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.